

The following Scripture passages are offered to aid beginning fellowships. The readings and commentary for this week are more in line with what has become usual; for the following will most likely be familiar observations. The concept behind this Sabbath's selection is Blasphemy against *the Holy Spirit*.

Weekly Readings For the Sabbath of December 15, 2007

The person conducting the Sabbath service should open services with two or three hymns, or psalms, followed by an opening prayer acknowledging that two or three (or more) are gathered together in Christ Jesus' name, and inviting the Lord to be with them.

The person conducting the service should read or assign to be read Matt chapter 12, verses 22 through 32.

Commentary: Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven ... every other sin will be forgiven.

If there is one sin—and only one sin—that will not be forgiven, then it would behoove a disciple to know what this sin is and to avoid it regardless of the cost to the disciple. It would behoove a disciple to revisit what Jesus said about a kingdom divided against itself is laid waste (Matt 12:25). He said that no city or house divided against itself will stand. This includes spiritual Jerusalem and the kingdom of heaven ... there is only one name given under heaven by which human beings are saved, and that name is Jesus Christ of Nazareth (Acts 4:10-12), who said He was “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6)—the three gates into the Holy of holies—and that “[n]o one comes to the Father except through [Him]” (same verse).

Salvation is not a many spoked wheel, with each spoke a theology. Nor does salvation come from the Father, who raises the dead and give them life (John 5:21). Salvation is not being born of Spirit for spiritual birth precedes judgment, and salvation comes through judgment: salvation comes through the revealing of judgments of those who have previously been born anew, with all judgment being given to Christ Jesus (*vv.* 22, 27), who said, “Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his [the Son of Man's] voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment [condemnation]” (*vv.* 28-29).

Because judgment has been given to no one other than Christ Jesus, He, Jesus, must decide whether a disciple will receive a second giving of life, with this second giving being the mortal flesh putting on immortality. Yes, life must be given by Jesus to those who will enter the kingdom of heaven as glorified saints (again John 5:21), and the giving of life or the withholding of life is a prerogative of God. Glorified human beings will judge angels, not other men ... Jesus gives life or doesn't give life to those disciples whom the Father has raised from the dead and to whom the Father has given life. It takes both the Father giving life and the Son giving life to a disciple before this person,

initially born as a descendant of the first Adam, becomes a glorified son of God, a younger sibling to Christ Jesus (Rom 8:29), like Christ in every way except without the power to give or withhold life. That power is, as far as Scripture reveals, limited to the Father and the Son, both of whom, according to John's gospel, were God in the beginning.

Having given all judgment to the Son while Jesus still lived as a man, the Father now judges no one, not even the Son. And if the Son were a man born of the first Adam and as such born consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32), and if the Son were to judge Himself, His judgment would not be true. But He does not judge Himself, nor did He have to determine whether his mortal flesh would put on immortality; for He had immortality prior to entering His creation as His only Son (John 3:16). Thus, He asks, "And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed" (John 17:5). He does not come under judgment, so the Father has no judgment to make in returning to Jesus the glory He had before the world existed. All that is asked is the return of what Jesus formerly possessed, for Jesus said, "I came not of my own accord, but he [God] sent me" (John 8:42 – also *v.* 29). Jesus entered His creation at the behest of the Father, and while He was here, He spoke the Father's words (*v.* 28), not His own. He came to reveal the Father to Israel, which did not know the Father (John 17:25-26 – also 14:8-11). He came to complete the creation, which would have mortal men [and women] becoming sons of God and younger siblings to Himself.

At this time of the year, in the Northern Hemisphere's wintry season much attention is paid to the Advent of Christ (His birth in a manger when the shepherds still had their sheep in the fields). However, traditionally, the churches of God have not celebrated Christmas, nor should they celebrate this holiday. But in not celebrating Christmas, disciples in fellowships associated with the splintered churches of God ignore Christ, apparently embarrassed to mention His name. The *Eternal* [i.e., God the Father] receives plenty of attention as if salvation comes through the name of the Father instead of the name of the Son. And because salvation comes only through the name of Christ Jesus—not through how His name is uttered, for no one can take His name in vain by stuttering or by pronouncing it in a foreign tongue, but through belief in Him—the traditional avoidance of mentioning Christ in this last month of the Roman year is an actual denial of Christ, and the disciple who denies Christ will be denied by Christ when judgments are revealed.

It is not easy to abstain from participation in the holidays of this world, but it is not difficult to acknowledge Jesus as every disciple's Savior. To acknowledge Christ, all a person needs do is believe that the One who made all things and for whom all things were made entered His creation as His only Son (the first Advent story): His life was worth more than the entirety of all that had/had been made. He "has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself" (Heb 3:3). The writer of Hebrews compares Moses to a house built by Christ, a comparison that necessarily has Christ predating Moses. This comparison, seen in the following passage,

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he

upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. (Heb 1:1-4)

has Christ being God and being the One who did the actual creating of this world, thereby making Christ able to judge sons of God as glorified disciples will be able to judge angels.

To say that Christ Jesus as His father, the *Logos* who was *Theos*, did not create all that is and did not cease to be God when He entered His creation to be born as the man Jesus of Nazareth is blasphemy—there is no other word that describes such a denial of Christ. Trinitarians do not make this exact mistake; rather, they errantly assign personhood to God's divine Breath [a metaphor for the force by which God sustains life in the heavenly realm]. It is Arian Christians (disciples who believe that Jesus is a created being in the way that men or angels are), and Unitarians (disciples who believe in only one God, with this God, the Father, being the creator of all that is) who deny Christ by denying that He was/is the Creator of all that is: they twist Scripture until they wring the beginning and end from it, leaving only the contorted middle that has Calvary being an interesting (but not necessary to salvation) phenomenon. And for too many of these neo-Arians and Unitarians, how the name of God is uttered is of far more importance than Calvary.

The man Jesus' birth has significance, but its date is not what is significant. That it happened is what is of importance. Besides, shepherds were still in the fields with their flocks when it occurred so the fall rains, seen in Scripture in Ezra 10:9, had not yet begun; Jesus' birth occurred earlier than the ninth month. And when the courses of the priesthood are calculated, Jesus birth would have occurred about the first high Sabbath of Sukkoth or near the middle of the seventh month of the sacred year [in late September on the Roman calendar]. This would have placed Mary's impregnation near the end of December—it seems that her impregnation or visitation was, at one time, an occasion for celebration. Somehow, the nine months required for gestation were forgotten when all things Jewish were purged from Christianity from the 2nd through 4th Centuries CE. And certainly, neither Santa Claus nor red-nosed reindeer has anything to do with Christ's conception so Christmas as celebrated in North America is a holiday that should be forgotten.

However, Christ Jesus should not be forgotten, and that has been the practice of many Sabbatarian disciples every December: sermons addressing prophecy, always a popular subject (especially when the one delivering the sermon has no prophetic understanding), are delivered in Sabbatarian fellowships; sermons addressing everything except Christ and His entry into His creation as the man Jesus are given. And that practice needs to end this year.

If denial of Christ's divinity prior to His birth as a man is blasphemy—and it is—then denial of the Holy Spirit would also be blasphemy, and it is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit that will not be forgiven. So here, when discussing the unpardonable sin, is where Unitarians help show what constitutes denial of the Holy Spirit through their denial of Christ, for these sincerely wrong disciples worship what they don't understand.

So that there is no misunderstanding concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit: in every occasion in Hebrew and in Greek, the Holy Spirit is analogous to moving air, invisible, but able to convey sound waves and to do work. It is said to be like wind, like

deep breath, like sharply exhaled breath, like shouted words carried forth by a person's breath, like spoken words transmitted through modulations of air. It gives life as human breath gives life (through its delivery of oxygen in cells where sugars are burned as fuel). It is used to create and to circumcise, to teach and to comfort, to destroy and to kill. It is, for the Apostle Paul, a force that is the antithesis of matter. And nowhere is personhood assigned to the Holy Spirit, for what is translated as the Holy Spirit speaking is Paul [and others] hearing the words of God delivered from the mouth of God by His divine Breath, which Paul was commissioned to hear (Acts 22:14). So it is always a theological mistake to assign personhood to the Holy Spirit. Plus, Christ has a Spirit or Breath that is a separate Breath from that of the Father, the one who raised Him from the dead (*cf.* Rom 8:9, 11)—separate in the same way that one person's breath is separate from another person's even though each person shares the commonality of breathing the same air.

Is assigning personhood to the Holy Spirit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? Yes, it is even though it isn't a denial of the Spirit in the way that Unitarians deny the divinity of Christ prior to His human birth—and this denial will cost them their salvation, not because it cannot be forgiven if repented of, but because they cannot repent of it and remain Unitarians. Note the preceding clause: to be a Unitarian, a person must necessarily deny that Christ was the Creator of all that is. It is this denial of Christ that will cause Christ to deny the person when judgments of revealed. While some neo-Arians acknowledge that though Christ is a created being, He was the Creator of all that is [the Latter Day Saints, in particular, hold this position], Unitarians will always have God the Father being the Creator of the universe. And it is Unitarians' inability to repent and remain Unitarians that is seen, in type, when God sends a strong delusion over those disciples that form the great falling away (2 Thess 2:3-12).

- When the lawless one, the man of perdition, is revealed, many disciples who have recently been liberated from indwelling sin will take sin back inside themselves through a transgression of the law—these disciples constitute the great falling away, which will occur seven-plus months into the Tribulation.
- All disciples will have been liberated from indwelling sin and death at the beginning of the Tribulation through empowerment by, or being filled with the Holy Spirit; so to take sin back inside the disciple is a denial of the disciple's liberation.
- When a disciple, after being liberated from indwelling sin, returns to sin, God will send a great delusion over the disciple so that the disciple will believe that what he or she has done is correct; thus the disciple will not repent—and without repentance, the disciple will not be forgiven.
- God will send the delusion over the disciple who has returned to sin because no more sacrifice remains for the disciple. Even though the disciple still physically lives, he or she will die in the second death, the lake of fire.
- After liberation from indwelling sin, the most common commandment broken by those disciples who constitute the great falling away will be the Sabbath commandment as the lawless one attempts to change times and the law.

Once the Tribulation begins, those disciples who commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will have denied the Holy Spirit, will have said by their return to sin that the Holy Spirit was not sufficient to liberate them from sin, and these disciples will not be able to

repent because of the great delusion God sends over them so their denial cannot be forgiven them—and it is the inability to repent that causes blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to be the unforgivable sin.

But can blasphemy of the Holy Spirit occur prior to the beginning of the Tribulation? Can it, does it occur today? And how, today, can disciples deny the Holy Spirit?

Unitarians deny Christ by contending that the Father created the universe and that the Father was the God seen by Moses and the seventy (Ex 24:9-11). They give to another the glory and honor that rightfully belongs to Christ. Trinitarians avoid this by making both the Father and Christ one in an unexplainable triune deity, thereby assigning singularity to the linguistic icon /one/ rather than unity. Traditionally, the churches of God have held that the Father and the Son are two separate deities that form one family, which is a better though not perfect understanding of what Scripture reveals. The churches of God then assign the role of Creator to the pre-existing Son, while causing the Father to textually disappear until heard in the New Testament when Jesus comes to reveal Him. And this is not correct: the Father is present in everything that the *Logos* did. The two functioned as one, not as two. And the analogy or metaphor used is that of marriage, in which a husband and his wife become one flesh so that whatever the wife does, she does as the helpmate of the husband, not as a separate entity working alone.

If a military general, when walking the parade grounds, casually mentions that the grass is a little long, the grass gets mowed without him or her touching a lawnmower. But if an American husband mentions that the kitchen dishes are stacked precariously in the sink, he will, most likely, be told by his wife that he, too, knows how to wash dishes. The assertion of personhood by both the husband and wife are the expectations of 21st-Century marriages in America ... two are not one, but remain two living together in some sort of shared accommodations. And because marriages are not today perceived as true unions of personhood in which neither force nor coercion nor political negotiation is used to compel compliance to shared values and goals, the probability of an American comprehending a relationship in which two are one is small. However, the singularity of purpose and deeds of the Father and the pre-existing Son are seen in the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*, where the two are wedded in an unpronounced union as one deity, not as two deities even though they are two entities. Thus, the Father created through the pre-existing Son doing the actual work of creating [and even in this age of equality within marriage, many wives will be better able to appreciate this analogy than will their husbands].

Right here a warning needs to be included against careless reading: The concept most often attributed to Binitarians is that they believe in two Gods, with Herbert W. Armstrong expressing this concept through saying that *God is a family*. This is a problematic declaration, for God is one deity, not one family as English speakers understand the word. If God were more than one deity, then the kingdom of heaven would, at some point, divide and fail. So God can only be one. But as a wife should be one with her husband, the two becoming one flesh (not through the birth of children but by the union of wills) and no longer two, God is one spirit, one deity, one in the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*, but two in the same way that a man and his wife are one but exist as two ... the concept of two being one really defies human logic, especially so with women becoming increasingly reluctant to surrender their personhood in marriage: the reason for women to cover is to publicly show that they have surrendered their

“separateness” to their husbands, presently a truly alien concept for human beings consigned to disobedience. So, yes, “one” can be understood as “unity,” but the concept of God being one includes unity as well as singleness.

The plan of God required that the Helpmate enter His creation as His only Son, thereby “dying” in the heavenly realm but living in the physical realm as the man Jesus, with these two—the Father in heaven and Jesus on earth—being one in a relationship described as a hypostatic union. The only problem with this description of *God being one* is the assignment of a single personhood to the “one hypostasis” eliminated the existence of two entities forming this single personhood. Yes, there was a single personhood which is one deity, but two entities formed this single personhood, with the concept of one hypostasis seen in John chapter 14, verses 8 through 11.

Armstrong’s expression of the hypostatic union was through the use of the “family” metaphor, which has some merit when thinking physically and thinking of God having characteristics like human beings have—when God is created in the image of man, not man in the image of God. ... Moses gave divorce to Israel because of the hardness of that nation’s hearts. The use of “family” comes from giving God this same hardness of heart; for in the denotative meaning of family is the assumption that families consist of a collection of related individuals. Marriage should not consist of a collection of related individuals, nor even consist of two individuals once it is consummated. When the hardness of hearts, coming from humankind being consigned to disobedience, is eliminated from marriage, the two joined in marriage cease being two individuals—cease having separateness—and become one flesh, one individual that consists of two persons having acquired one personhood. And because this is virtually impossible to comprehend by those whose minds are set on the things of the flesh, the use of the “family” metaphor will not soon end although *God* does not consist of a collection of related individuals, but is one deity that now consists of two entities.

When the resurrected Jesus received the glory He formerly had, the relationship between the two entities [the Father and the Son] that formed the one deity was not again expressed by the marriage metaphor, but in the metaphor of a father and his eldest son, the one who gives the inheritance and the one who receives this inheritance, with that inheritance binding the two together into one unit, and with that “inheritance” being Godhood. So even though the Father and the Son are two entities, they are one deity, not one family. There is absolutely no separateness in these two, who have their own Spirits or Breaths.

The sloppy reader will contend that the above makes no sense but is doublespeak—and for this reader, it is. This reader is not a person with sufficient spiritual maturity to envision human beings possessing the mind of Christ rather than the nature of Satan, which all of humanity possessed or possesses through being consigned to disobedience ... this same sloppy reader will object to hearing that human beings presently have the nature of Satan, who, the Apostle Paul tells disciples, comes appearing as an angel of light, not as a terrible ogre as ugly in appearance as Medieval artists portrayed him. The “good” that human beings do comes from them determining what is good and what is evil, and it is the determination of good and evil that is, itself, “evil,” for that determination produces separateness and individualism which will inevitably cause division, and in human beings, divorce.

So ignoring the careless or sloppy reader, God is not one family but one deity that prior to the resurrection of saints is composed of two entities, but once the Son

“marries” the Bride will be composed of many more entities, altogether still forming one deity through marriage causing two to become one.

Herbert W. Armstrong used to use the analogy of his surname, Armstrong, to explain this concept as he understood it: he was “Armstrong,” and his son Garner Ted was “Armstrong”—and it is here where his *family* analogy fails, for he disfellowshipped his son in 1978, and his son began a competing ministry which took from Herbert W. Armstrong’s organization a few ministers and a few thousand disciples. “Armstrong” became a house divided, and it failed; whereas God is not a house divided, and never will be a house divided, for it will always be “one.” Many are called but few are chosen (Matt 22:14), for only a few will voluntarily—with no outside pressure, no force, no coercion—choose to separate themselves from the common pool of all who have been born of Spirit. Only a few will begin living as Judeans. And it is these few who will walk as Jesus walked, who will imitate Paul who committed no offence against the law or the temple, and it is these few who will surrender their identities to take on the identity of Christ Jesus, thereby becoming one with Him so that when glorified they will exist as a separate entities from Jesus but will be one with Him in every way. Yes, as younger brothers to Christ Jesus they will have characteristics that are included in descriptions of “family,” but they will also possess a singleness that is not characteristic of a family but of a single individual.

The desire to preserve human uniqueness comes from being consigned to disobedience. It is an unavoidable trait of everyone who is not yet mature in faith, so in that sense it is neither good nor bad—it is like a cat pouncing on a mouse in that the desire to preserve uniqueness is presently part of human nature. So the hardness of hearts Moses encountered produced independence of personhood even when an absence of “power” didn’t allow outward expression of independence for most women, and it was this independence that prevented two individuals from ever becoming one flesh. It is the impossibility of two human beings becoming one that hindered Israel, and hinders disciples today from envisioning God as multiple entities but only one deity in the past, present, and future (when saints are glorified).

There is no simpler way to express the concept of God being one than through the attribute of giving and receiving the inheritance of life: the One who gives [the Father] and the ones who receive life [the sons] are united in this “life,” not as a family is defined through a name, but as a single living organism is described through its possession of life. Hence, Paul uses the metaphor of the Church being like a human body, with hands, feet, and less comely parts. All appendages and divisions of the torso form one body, not one family. All gloried entities that have life coming through the Holy Spirit, the divine Breath of the Father [$\piνεύμα ἅγιον$]*—that have life as the Father and the Son have life—form one deity, not one family, in the same way that appendages and divisions of the torso form one body. This is what Armstrong apparently never could comprehend although what he taught was closer to the truth than his detractors now acknowledge.*

But Armstrong was closer to the truth on the wrong side of the truth, on the pantheist side.

The Christological debates of the early Church held as their base assumption that God could only be one, and because these debates were staged when lawlessness defined the Church, they wrongly decided the most important issue of the era: life coming through the Holy Spirit is the inheritance that joins the Father with the Son, and to future sons. Denying the Holy Spirit is a denial of that inheritance, is a denial of life

itself in the heavenly realm. Therefore, assigning to the Holy Spirit personhood becomes a denial of the Holy Spirit as the divine life-force [described in the metaphor “Breath”] which gives to God life—which gives life to every entity composing the single living deity. The disciple who gives personhood to the divine Breath of God mocks God, both the Father and the Son, as well as every disciple who will be numbered among the chosen, but then, this disciple already disbelieves God about he or she being an actual son.

Unitarians deny Christ and will be denied by Christ. The Trinitarian denies that he or she has received everlasting life through receipt of the Holy Spirit, believing instead that he or she was born with an immortal soul; therefore, the Trinitarian denies that life is the inheritance given by the Father and coming through Christ Jesus by receipt of the Holy Spirit, and by doing so, the Trinitarian denies his or her own spiritual life, which is blasphemy. And as long as the person remains a Trinitarian, assigning personhood to the Holy Spirit, the person continues to deny his or her own spiritual life ... again, as the Unitarian will deny his or her denial of Christ’s divinity [there’s a whole lot of denying going on within Christendom], the Trinitarian will not concede that he or she rejects the life that comes by receipt of the Holy Spirit, claiming that the Holy Spirit has “regenerated” the immortal soul the person received at birth.

- Claiming that the person received an immortal soul at birth is denial of spiritual life coming through receipt of the Holy Spirit, and as such, is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
- Claiming that a person is born with a little angel inside the person is denial of spiritual life coming through receipt of the Holy Spirit, and as such, is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
- Claiming to have immortal or spiritual life in any way or from any source other than receipt of the Holy Spirit is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Again, a Unitarian cannot be a Unitarian without denying that Christ is the Creator of all that is—and this denial of Christ will cause Christ to deny the disciple in his or her resurrection ... the God of love is the one who inspired the prophet Isaiah to write,

Behold, the Lord [YHWH] will empty the earth and make it desolate,
and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants ...

The earth shall be utterly empty and utterly plundered;
for the Lord [YHWH] has spoken this word.

The earth mourns and withers;
the world languishes and withers;
the highest people of the earth languish.

The earth lies defiled
under its inhabitants;
for they have transgressed the laws,
violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.

Therefore a curse devours the earth,
and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt;
therefore the inhabitants of the earth are scorched,
and few men are left. (Isa 24:1, 3-6)

The idea that Christ will allow most anyone into heaven is utterly false: if a disciple does not voluntarily choose to be one with Christ in this world, walking as Jesus walked, living as a physically uncircumcised Judean, a hated people, the person does not love

God enough to give up his or her individuality and become one with God; the disciple is not someone Christ will marry, nor want to marry.

Therefore, the Trinitarian who cannot be a Trinitarian without assigning personhood to the Holy Spirit should not expect Christ to make any exceptions for him or her. Every Trinitarian denies that he or she initially received spiritual life through receipt of the Holy Spirit; therefore, every Trinitarian denies the Holy Spirit and commits blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Which is better, to deny Christ and be denied by Christ, or to assign personhood to the Holy Spirit and thereby deny that the disciple initially received everlasting life by receipt of the Holy Spirit? How about Armstrong's position that disciples are not born of Spirit until they are glorified—is this denial of the Holy Spirit? Yes, it is. So is this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? No one should be in the position of having to find out when judgments are revealed.

Again, the ultimate form of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit comes after disciples have been liberated from indwelling sin and death through being empowered by [filled with] the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the seven endtime years of tribulation. The Son of Man, Head and now-covered Body, will be revealed or made naked (Luke 17:30). Grace will end as natural grace ended with the coming of the Law (Rom 5:13). No longer will there be any indwelling of sin; so the person who takes sin back inside him or herself will have committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and no sacrifice will remain for this person.

To teach that God can be described as a family approaches blasphemy if it doesn't cross the line, but such teaching is like that what occurs in basic Chemistry classes where electrons are assigned neat orbits around the atom's nucleus, orbits like those of the inner planets around the sun. This Chemistry teaching is false, for electrons exist as a fog around an atom's nucleus. But that concept is too difficult—or so many Chemistry teachers contend—for beginning students to understand so the false concept of orbits is used to better introduce the idea of valence electrons ... it is past time to end the teaching of what is false even if the concept of *God is one* but consists of multiple entities is seemingly too difficult for beginners to understand. And it is certainly past time to end assigning personhood to the Holy Spirit, and to end denying that the pre-existing Son is the Creator of all that is.

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The person conducting the Sabbath service should close services with two hymns, or psalms, followed by a prayer asking God's dismissal.

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